



Congressman
Jim Saxton
NEWS RELEASE

339 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4765

100 HIGH STREET
MT. HOLLY, NJ 08060
(609) 261-5800

7 HADLEY AVENUE
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08753
(908) 914-2020

1 MAINE AVENUE
CHERRY HILL, NJ 08034
(609) 428-0520

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2000

CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
REP. JAMES SAXTON
SPECIAL OVERSIGHT PANEL ON TERRORISM
OPEN HEARING ON BIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, AND CYBER TERRORISM**

This afternoon, the Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism convenes in open session to hold its first hearing. This is, I think, an auspicious day. I personally have been studying and working actively on these issues for over ten years. And many of us, from both parties, have for years been watching terrorism evolve into an ever greater threat. We have been increasingly concerned that the growing threat is not understood, or its implications fully appreciated. For that reason, I and my colleagues have sought the establishment of this Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism.

Through this panel, we hope to cast a spotlight on terrorism and related emerging threats. One of our chief goals is to illuminate the rapid emergence of what amounts to a new terrorism, different in kind and potentially vastly more destructive than the terrorism that we knew during the Cold War. This Panel will dissect the evolving phenomenon that is terrorism. Our objective is to understand how terrorism is changing, and where the terrorist threat is going, so that policymakers and the public will be better positioned to make informed decisions on what to do about that threat.

Therefore, in keeping with the purpose of this Panel to explore disturbing new aspects of terrorism, it is appropriate that our first hearing deal with cutting edge terrorist threats: biological terrorism, nuclear terrorism, and cyber terrorism.

Biological weapons are becoming easier for state and non-state actors to develop as bio-technologies proliferate. Indeed, many of the same technologies that are used for benign medical research or for innocuous commercial purposes-such as the fermentation of beer-can be used for manufacturing biological weapons. Biological weapons are relatively inexpensive and easy to make, and yet are potentially deadlier than nuclear weapons. Future terrorists wishing to wreak mass casualties may well turn to biological weapons.

Nuclear terrorism, regarded as the stuff of fictional novels and movies during the Cold War, is now widely regarded as plausible. Lax security at Russian nuclear weapon storage sites and at laboratories and power plants where nuclear materials are available raises the possibility of theft or sale of nuclear weapons

(MORE)

to terrorist groups. Terrorists armed with short-range missiles—which these days can be purchased even by arms collectors and museums on the international market—and armed with a nuclear weapon could conceivably make an electromagnetic pulse attack against the United States. An EMP attack could incapacitate power grids, communications, computer systems and other electronic infrastructure that makes modern society possible.

Terrorists could also build or acquire radio-frequency weapons and use these non-nuclear devices to selectively damage crucial parts of the U.S. electronic infrastructure. For example, a radio-frequency weapon detonated on Wall Street could erase electronic business records and cause billions of dollars worth of damage to the U.S. economy. Or, a relatively small radio-frequency weapon—built from readily available technology—could be used by a terrorist parked at the end of an airport runway to debilitate airplanes during take-off or landing.

Cyberterrorism could use information warfare techniques to manipulate computer systems to disrupt or incapacitate power grids and other infrastructure, without resort to nuclear or radio-frequency weapons. The ILOVEYOU virus is a recent example of cybervandalism—that disrupted governments and industry worldwide—and may foreshadow far more serious destruction that could be inflicted by cyberterrorists.

We have with us today a panel of independent experts to address these various threats:

Ken Alibek is Chief Scientist at Hadron, Inc., and was the Deputy Chief of Biopreparat, a leading biological weapons laboratory in the former Soviet Union.

Bron Cikotas is a nuclear weapons expert, was formerly EMP Division Chief with the Defense Nuclear Agency, is one of this nation's foremost experts on electromagnetic pulse phenomenon, and invented the Ground Wave Emergency Network to protect U.S. strategic communications from nuclear attack;

Dorothy Denning is a professor of computer science at Georgetown University and an authority on cyberterrorism and cybersecurity.

I thank our panel of distinguished witnesses for joining us today. But before proceeding to hear their testimony, I want to call upon Mr. Snyder, the Ranking Democrat on the Terrorism Panel, for any statement he may wish to make.

###